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SERVICE DATE - LATE RELEASE NOVEMBER 24, 1997

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB EX PARTE NO. 573

RAIL SERVICE IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES

STB SERVICE ORDER NO. 1518

JOINT PETITION FOR SERVICE ORDER

Decided: November 24, 1997

A public hearing regarding the status of railroad freight service in the western United States has been scheduled for Wednesday, December 3, 1997, at 10:00 a.m., in the Surface Transportation Board Hearing Room (Suite 760) at 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. The Board will provide an overflow room (the Brick Room) on the first floor of the building with a closed-circuit telecast of the entire hearing.

Given the large number of persons likely to attend the hearing on December 3, the Board requests that all participants and the general public attending the hearing use the building's entrance located on 20th Street between K and L Streets. Participants should enter through the two doors marked for their use, and report directly to the staff desk in the 20th Street lobby. For security reasons, upon entering the 20th Street entrance, all persons should be prepared to produce photo identification (such as a driver's license), pass through a metal detector, and submit to an inspection of all briefcases, handbags and any other bags. The hearing is expected to last all day, and the hearing room and the overflow room will be secured during the lunch recess.

To effectively conduct this hearing, the Board must limit access to the hearing room and the overflow room. All participants and approximately forty members of the public (first come, first served) will be permitted into the hearing room, and Board staff will issue them badges. Upon clearing security at the 20th Street entrance, the participants and some of the public will be escorted to the seventh floor hearing room. Organizations scheduled to testify are outlined in the Board's decision issued on Friday, November 21, 1997, in this proceeding. The order of speakers at the hearing has been predetermined and will not be altered. Participants should provide the Board's Office of the Secretary, at (202) 565-1650, with the names of their speakers and the total number in their group, by December 1, 1997.

The balance of the public not admitted to the hearing room will be admitted to the overflow room, which seats approximately 100. The public badges for the overflow room will be issued by Board staff at the 20th Street entrance on a first come, first served basis. Only holders of the public badges will be admitted to the first floor overflow room. "Line sitters" are permitted, but will not be issued badges.

Board staff will begin admitting people to the hearing room and overflow room at 8:30 a.m. All participants are requested to arrive early enough to be admitted to the hearing room by 9:45 a.m. Badge holders leaving the premises, and not intending to return, should relinquish their badge to Board staff. The Board's Hearing Room does comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act, and persons needing such accommodation should contact the Office of the Secretary at (202) 565-1650 by noon, December 1, 1997.

Participants submitting written statements of their presentations must submit an original and ten copies. Statements must be filed by noon on December 1, 1997. Pursuant to Board procedural rules, any submitted document that exceeds twenty pages in length must be submitted with a copy on diskette. The diskettes must be 3.5-inch IBM-compatible floppies or compact discs. Textual material must be in, or convertible into, WordPerfect 7.0. Spreadsheets must be in, or convertible into, Lotus 1-2-3 Version 7. Each diskette must be clearly labeled as to the document and the party. The Board urges all participants to submit a copy of their statements on diskette. Copies of all statements will be available at the Board's contractor, D.C. News and Data, Inc., located in Room 220 in the Board's building, as soon as the statements are processed by Board staff. D.C. News can be reached at 202/289-4357. The statements will also be available for viewing and self copying in the Board's Microfilm Unit, Room 755, after Board processing. The hearing will be video-taped, and the Board will make arrangements to have the tapes duplicated, at cost, if there is a public demand for copies of the tapes.

Participants planning to use visual aids, such as maps, are advised to inform the Office of the Secretary at (202) 565-1650, no later than close of business on Monday, December 1, 1997. Participants are limited to projector-adaptable visual displays or handouts. The Board will provide space for any handouts participants wish to bring to the hearing for dissemination to the public. The Board staff will be available in the Board's Hearing Room-Suite 760, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday, December 1, 1997, to demonstrate the Board's projection system.

Comments or questions concerning this decision should be directed to Bettye Uzzle, the Information Officer for the Office of the Secretary, at 202/565-1650.

It is ordered:

1. Admittance to the Surface Transportation Board hearing on December 3, 1997 will be upon the conditions set forth above.

2. This decision is effective on the date of service.

By the Board, Vernon A. Williams, Secretary.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary